INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL PROPOSAL

WORLD LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

PLYMOUTH NORTH HIGH SCHOOL

2013-2014 ACADEMIC YEAR

* DESTINATION VALBONNE, FRANCE
* DATES: April Vacation, 2014
* APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM TIES AND RELATIONSHIP TO MASSACHUSETTS COMMON CORE OF LEARNING:

Foreign travel contributes to the World Language Department’s objective that students are able to communicate competently in a second language, which aligns with the Massachusetts Common Core of Learning that students should be able to “read, write, and converse in at least one language in addition to English.” Immersion in a Spanish-speaking and French-speaking country, furthermore, builds up students’ confidence in their ability to express themselves in a second language and gives them a better understanding of how cultures connect to each other. Such travel provides an incomparable authentic learning experience while challenging students to use their classroom studies towards immediate practical ends.

SUMMARY OF THE EXCHANGE BETWEEN PNHS AND VHS.

* ANTICIPATED EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT
  1. The student will be able to practice the language
  2. Create confidence in a second language
  3. Have an empirical approach to the second language
  4. Have an empirical approach to the target culture
  5. ADD SOMETHING ABOUT MEETING PEOPLE IN PERSON
* PLANS FOR PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATIONS

Upon approval, the coordinators will publicize the trip to students in enrolled in the exchange program between language classes and others who meet the defined student travel criteria, including at least Stage 2 proficiency (“students use sentences, strings of sentences, and recombinations of learned words, phrases, and expressions with frequency of errors proportionate to the complexity of the communicative task,” *Massachusetts Foreign Languages Curriculum Framework*, August 1999, p. 14) in one of the languages spoken in the countries to be visited and passing an interview with the trip coordinators. The coordinators will also organize a preliminary meeting to contact students and parents interested in it. Additional organizational and recruiting meetings will be held through the winter, if needed. As the date for the trip approaches, weekly meetings will be held to acquaint the students with the country and its culture.

In addition to the series of orientation meetings, students will be assigned individual research projects to investigate a specific area of the history, society, or culture of the regions to be visited. An appropriately significant portion of the research should be conducted in the target language.

* POST-TRAVEL ASSESSMENT

Students will be required to produce a reflective piece upon their return from overseas. Options they can choose from could include:

* + a daily journal kept during their travel
  + a reflective essay on their experience
  + an open response essay to selected prompts (e.g., “I felt uncomfortable when…,” “I felt proud…”)
  + a visual presentation of images collected during travel, accompanied by a text in the foreign language
* TENTATIVE COST, TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS, AND LOCAL CONTACTS:

Cost is under negotiation with Immersion Tours. Quoted rates as of December 2013 range from $600 to $900 for four to five days of travel, including motor coach transport, lodging, breakfasts, dinners and medical insurance. Final cost will be largely determined by the number of participating students. Students will need additional funds for lunches, gifts, and spending money.

* SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Students will organize fundraisers (bake sales, car washes, etc.) to defray the overall expense of the trip. Several local businesses, such as Tracy Chevrolet, have a history of sponsoring PNHS activities; trip organizers will aggressively seek scholarship money from them, in the hope of raising enough to pay the complete costs of one or two students who can demonstrate need. Such scholarships would go to students who meet or exceed the academic requirements for the trip but have verified financial hardship, for example by qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Student travel companies also offer financial incentives to trip organizers for meeting certain recruitment goals (e.g. having a given number of students enrolled by a specific date), and these incentives will be turned over to a general scholarship fund.

* SUPERVISION

Adult chaperones, in the ratio of 1:10, will accompany the students throughout the entire trip. During the day, professional guides will lead students and chaperones on an intensive sightseeing schedule and direct them to restaurants where they can purchase lunch. Breakfast and dinner will be served in the hotels, where chaperones will also accompany the students. Chaperones will also enforce a reasonable curfew, doing a bedcheck at curfew. Immersion Tours provides night supervision, which is included in the overall cost. Students who violate the PNHS Code of Conduct as defined in the Student Handbook will be sent home at their own expense. Parents will be informed in writing of these rules, will sign off on them, and will provide credit card information in the event the need arises.

* WRITTEN PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL: See attached
* MINIMUM NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 20